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ESTHER,

AN ORATORIO. K

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANASUERUS.

ESTHER.

ISRAELITE WOMEN.

MORDECAI.

First ISRAELITE.

Second ISRAELITE.

HAMAN.

HABDONAH.

Chorus of Israelites.

Chorus of Persian Officers.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Esther, Mordecai, and Chorus of Israelites.

RECITATIVE accompany'd.

Wom. **B**REATHE soft ye gales, ye rills in silence
roll,
And heav'nly peace reside in Esther's soul.

AIR.

Watchful angels, let her share
Your indulgent, daily care.

RECITATIVE.

Esther. O! King of kings, celestial Lord!
Whose works our admiration raise,
With rapture shall my lips record
Thy Majesty's immortal praise. Hallelujah.

SCENE II.

Haman, Habdonah, and Officers.

RECITATIVE.

Hab. 'Tis greater far to spare, than to destroy.
Ham. I'll hear no more; it is decreed,
All the Jewish race shall bleed.
Hear, and obey, what Haman's voice commands:
Hath not the lord of all the east,
Giv'n all his pow'r into my hands!

Hear all ye nations far and wide,
Which own our monarch's sway;
Hear, and obey.

AIR.

Pluck root and branch from out the land,
Shall I the God of Israel fear?
Let Jewish blood dye ev'ry hand,
Nor age, nor sex I'll spare.
Raze, raze, their temples to the ground,
And let their place no more be found.
Off. Our souls with ardour glow,
To execute the blow.

CHORUS.

Shall we the God of Israel fear?
Nor age, nor sex we'll spare.
Pluck root and branch from out the land.

SCENE III.

Israel. Jerusalem no more shall mourn,
In sad captivity forlorn:
The righteous God, in whom we trust,
Will be propitious to the just.
To rapture then your voices raise,
And change your sighs to songs of praise.

AIR.

Wom. Tune your harps to cheerful strains,
Moulder idols into dust;
Great Jehovah lives and reigns,
We in great Jehovah trust.

A

De Copti

AIR.

Praise the Lord with cheerful noise,
Wake my glory, wake my lyre;
Praise the Lord each mortal voice;
Praise the Lord ye heav'nly choir.
Zion now her head shall raise,
Tune your harps to songs of praise. *Da Capo.*

CHORUS.

Shall we of servitude complain,
The heavy yoke, and galling chain!

SCENE IV.

RECITATIVE.

Mor. How have our sins provok'd the Lord!
Wild persecution hath unheath'd the sword,
Haman hath sent forth his decree;
The sons of Israel all
Shall in one ruin fall.

Methinks I hear the mother's groans,
While babes are dash'd against the stones.
I hear the infant's shriller screams,
Stabb'd at the mother's breast;
Blood stains the murderer's vest,
And thro' the city flows in streams.

AIR.

O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide!
Shall we no more behold thee glide
The fertile vales along,
As in our great forefathers' days?
Shall not thy hills resound thy praise,
And learn our holy song. *Da Capo.*

CHORUS.

Ye sons of Israel mourn,
Ye never to your country shall return.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Esther and Chorus of Israelites.

CHORUS.

TYRANTS may a while presume,
They never shall receive their doom;
But they soon shall trembling know,
Stern justice strikes the surest blow.

SCENE II.

Mordecai and Esther.

RECITATIVE.

Esther. Why sits that sorrow on thy brow?
Why is thy rev'rend head
With mournful ashes spread?
Why is that humble sackcloth worn?
Speak, Mordecai, my kinsman, friend;
Speak, and let Esther know
Why all this solemn woe?

Mor. One fate involves us all:

Haman's decree,
To strike at me,
Hath said, that ev'ry Jew shall fall.
Go stand before the king with weeping eye.

Esther. Who goes unsummon'd, by the laws shall die.

Mor. Haste to the king, his mercy crave,
Trust to th' Almighty, and be brave.
Why wer't thou rais'd to Persia's throne?
Not for thy sake alone.

AIR.

Dread not, righteous queen, the danger,
Love will pacify his anger;
Fear is due to God alone:
Follow great Jehovah's calling;
For thy kindred's safety falling,
Death is better than a throne. *Da Capo.*

RECITATIVE.

Esther. I go, the power of grief to prove;
O! may that grief compassion move.

AIR.

Tears assist me, pity moving,
Justice, cruel fraud reproving.
Hear, O God! thy servant's prayer:
Is it blood that must atone?
Take, O take my life alone,
And thy chosen people spare!

CHORUS.—ANTHEM.

As pants the hart for cooling streams,
So longs my soul for thee, O God!

SOLO.

Tears are my daily food,
While thus they say,
Where is now thy God?

SOLO.

Now, when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart
by myself;
For I went with the multitude, and brought them
forth into the house of God.

CHORUS.

In the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such
as keep holy-day.

DUET.

Why so full of grief, O my soul: why so disquieted
within me?

CHORUS.

Put thy trust in God, for I will praise him.

SCENE III.

Ahasuerus, Esther, and Chorus of Israelites.

Aba. Who dares intrude into our presence
Without our leave!

It is decreed,
He dies for this audacious deed.

Hah! Esther there!

The law condemns, but love will spare.

Esther. My spirits sink; alas! I faint.

Aba. Ye pow'rs! what paleness spreads her beau-
teous face!

Esther awake, thou fairest of thy race;
Awake and live, 'tis my command;
Behold the golden sceptre in my hand,
Sure sign of grace;
The bloody stern decree
Was never meant, my queen, to strike at thee.

DUET.

Esther. Who calls my parting soul from death?

Aba. Awake, my soul, my life, my breath!

Esther. Hear my suit, or else I die.

Aba. Alk, my queen, can I deny?

SONG.

O beauteous queen, unclothe those eyes,
My fairest shall not bleed:
Hear love's soft voice that bids thee rise,
And bids thy suit succeed.
Alk, and 'tis granted from this hour,
Who shares our heart, shall share our power.

RECITATIVE.

Esther. If I find favour in thy sight,
May the great monarch of the east
Honour my feast,
And deign to be his servant's guest:
The king and Haman I invite.

AIR.

Aba. How can I stay, when love invites!
I come, my queen, to chaste delights.
With joy, with pleasure, I obey;
To thee I give the day.

Da Capo.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Manent Israelites.

I Israel. With inward joy his visage glows,
He to the queen's apartment goes.
Beauty hath his fury charm'd,
And all his wrath disarm'd.

AIR.

Heav'n has lent her ev'ry charm
Rising fury to disarm.
And the monarch's breast will prove,
That each passion yields to love.

CHORUS.—ANTHEM.

The king shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord!
Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.

DUET and CHORUS.

His honour is great in thy salvation;
Glory and great worship shall thou lay upon him.

CHORUS.

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph
In the name of the Lord our God. Hallelujah.

A C T III.

SCENE I.

Mordecai and Chorus of Israelites.

RECITATIVE.

Mor. **JEHOVAH**, crown'd with glory bright,
Surrounded with eternal light,
Whose ministers are flames of fire,
Arise and execute thine ire.

CHORUS.

He comes! he comes to end our woes,
And pour his vengeance on our foes.
Earth trembles, lofty mountains nod;
Jacob arise, and meet thy God.

SCENE II.

Aba. Now, O queen, thy suit declare;
Alk half my empire, and 'tis thine.

Esther. O gracious king, my people spare,
For in their lives you strike at mine;
Reverse the dire decree,

The blow is aim'd at Mordecai and me:
And is the fate of Mordecai decreed,
Who, when the Russian's sword
Sought to destroy my royal lord,
Brought forth to light the desp'rate deed!

Aba. Yes, yes I own, to him alone
I owe my life and throne:

Say then, my queen, who dares pursue
The life to which reward is due.

Esther. 'Tis Haman's hate
That sign'd his fate.

Aba. I swear by yon bright globe of light,
Which rules the day,
That Haman's fight
Shall never more behold the golden ray!

AIR.

Ham. Turn not, O queen, thy face away,
Behold me prostrate on the ground!
O speak, his glowing fury stay,
Let mercy in thy fight be found.

AIR.

Esther. Flattering tongue, no more I'll hear thee,
Vain are all thy cruel wiles;
Bloody wretch, no more I fear thee,
Vain thy frowns, and vain thy smiles.
Tyrant, when of pow'r possess'd;
Now thou tremblest, when distress'd. *Da Capo.*

RECITATIVE.

Aba. Guards, seize the traitor, bear him hence;
Death shall reward the dire offence:
To Mordecai be honour paid;
The royal garment bring.
My diadem shall grace his head;
Let him in triumph thro' the streets be led,
Who sav'd the king.

AIR.

Thro' the nation he shall be
Next in dignity to me;
All my people shall revere
Merit to their prince so dear,
Daily to his honour'd name,
Incense shall on altars flame.

CHORUS.

All applauding crowds around
Shall his deathless fame resound.

Ham. How art thou fallen from thy height!
Tremble, ambition, at the sight;
In pow'r let mercy sway;
When adverse fortune is thy lot,
Lest thou by mercy be forgot,
And perish in that day.

Da Capo.

SCENE III.

Israelites with Mordecai in Triumph.

GRAND CHORUS.

The Lord our enemy has slain :

Ye sons of Jacob, sing a chearful strain.

Hallelujah, solo.

Hallelujah.

Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee,

Hallelujah.

The worship of our God is free.

Hallelujah.

For ever blessed be his holy name,

Let Heav'n and earth his praise proclaim.

Hallelujah



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